

[CLAIMS]

I claim

- 5 1. A machine for marking skins or other articles in sheet form by perforation, comprising:
- a support structure [(12)] for m rows each formed from n vertical punches [(2)], m and n being whole numbers with $m \geq 1$ and $n \geq 2$, the upper ends of said punches being inserted into holes [(28)] of a corresponding plate [(30)]
 - 10 elastically supported on said support structure [(12)], [the] each lower [ends] end of [said] vertical punches of each row interacting with a corresponding wedge element [(8)] of a plurality of n.m wedge elements, each wedge element being operable by [an] the axial movement of a corresponding [operating] bar [(14)] to position said punches between two end positions in
 - 15 which the punches remain fixed, in one of which [a] the cutting edge of [said] punches is substantially at the level of [an] the upper surface of [said] the plate [(30)] and in the other of which [said] the cutting edge of [said] the punches lies inside [said] the hole, the distance between the two end positions of [said] the cutting [edge] edges corresponding with the thickness
 - 20 of [said] the operating bars [(14)] for [said] the wedges [(8)],
 - moving means [(18, 20)] for said bars,
 - a counterplate [(34)] facing [said] the plate and movable vertically towards and away from said plate [(30)] to cause this latter to descend together with [a] the skin retained between them towards said punches and obtain
 - 25 perforation by only those punches which have their cutting edge at the level of the upper surface of the plate and which have been positioned in an

arrangement corresponding to an alphanumeric character in accordance with a predetermined code.

2. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein the wedges [(8)] which operate the punches [(2)] of each row are positioned in a single horizontal plane and are mutually adjacent.

3. A machine as claimed in claim 2, wherein said operating bars [(14)] are shaped such that at that end which acts on said wedges [(8)] they lie in a single plane and are mutually adjacent.

4. A machine as claimed in claim 3, wherein at the opposite end to that which acts on said wedges [(8)], said bars [(14)] are provided with articulated joints for their connection to the moving means.

5. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein the operating bars for the punches of any row are superposed on the bars of the punches of the other rows.

6. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein each punch [(2)] consists of a cylindrical body provided at its upper end with a cutting part [(26)], said counterplate [(34)] comprising a number of holes [(40)] equal to the number of said punches [(2)] and having their axis aligned with the punch axis.

7. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein said counterplate comprises collimation elements [(42)] cooperating with corresponding holes [(44)] provided in said plate [(30)].

8. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plate [(30)] comprises holes [(50)] for housing reference punches [(52)], the cutting ends of which are essentially coplanar with the upper surface of said plate [(30)] when said plate is in its unstressed configuration.

9. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein said moving means consist of pneumo-hydraulic cylinders [(20)].

10. A machine as claimed in claim 9, wherein said cylinders are provided with conduits opening into a single receiver [(22)] and are provided with
5 solenoid shut-off valves [(24)].

11. A machine as claimed in claim 10, wherein said solenoid valves [(24)] are controlled by an electronic system.

12. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein said counterplate [(34)] is rigid with piston [(36)] of a cylinder [(38)], the stroke of said piston being
10 controlled by a pedal unit [(48)].

13. A machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein said punches consist of cylinders with conical ends and with an internal discharge channel, said counterplate being constructed of soft material, preferably nylon.